

new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 67/MAY 2015

NYS Communities and Changes to the American Community Survey

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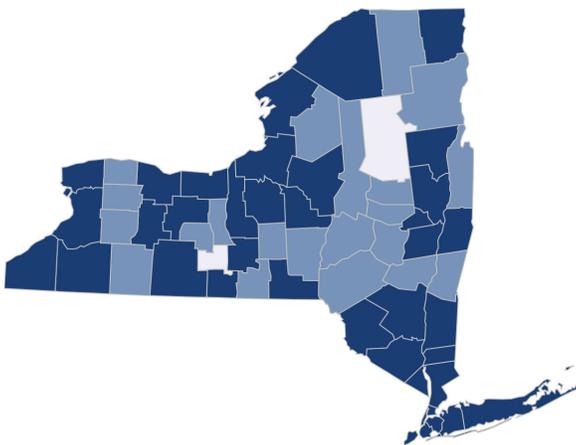
In an effort to save money, the Census Bureau will eliminate its three-year American Community Survey (ACS) data program. The ACS is a survey that tracks changing economic and social conditions for a wide range of geographies, and communities and organizations use this data for grant writing, program evaluation, and tracking general well-being. Data is collected on an on-going basis and tabulated for 1, 3, and 5 year periods. Up until the present, depending on population size, communities have had access to 1-year (communities 65,000+), 3-year (communities 20,000+), and 5-year tabulations (communities of all sizes). Access is more limited for smaller geographies because it takes a longer period to accumulate a sufficient sample size to produce statistically meaningful data.

While even the 5-year tabulations are released every year, in order to make meaningful comparisons over time, the tabulations used in any analysis of change should be for non-overlapping periods (and therefore contain completely independent observations). This requires waiting a full five years to assess whether statistically meaningful change has occurred (for example, comparing the 2005-2009 tabulation with the 2010-2014 tabulation – the first time since the ACS has been released that completely independent 5-year tabulations can be compared).

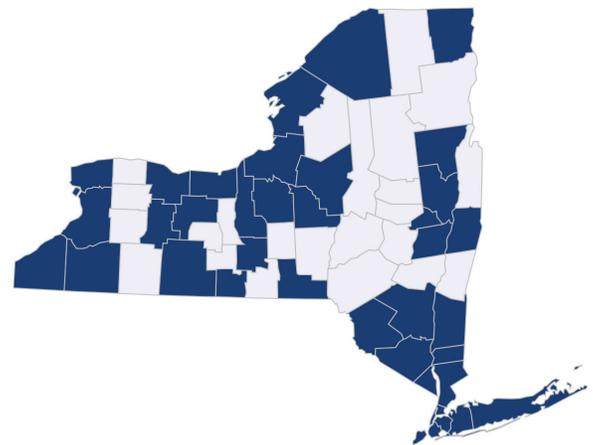
In New York State, 21 counties will lose access to the 3-year estimates as their most up-to-date data. For smaller population sizes and levels of geography the impact is even greater. For example, 161 school districts and 21 cities across the state will have to switch to the 5 year tabulations as their only option for the ACS. To read more on potential impacts for communities and organizations using this data, see suggested resources below.

Change in ACS availability for NYS Counties

ACS access *prior to* 3-year tabulation elimination



ACS access *after* 3-year tabulation elimination



Only 5 year ACS
 3 and 5 year ACS
 1, 3, and 5 year ACS

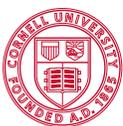
Additional Resources

Census Reduces Data for Mid-Sized Places, by Robert Scardamalia, Daily Yonder:

<http://www.dailyyonder.com/census-data-cut-will-hurt-mid-sized-places/2015/03/16/7770>

The ACS 3-year Demographic Estimates Are History, by Ken Poole. APDU:

<http://apdu.org/2015/02/03/the-ac3-year-demographic-estimates-are-history/>



Cornell University

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